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Wearing Proper Eye Protection in the Home, Yard and Garage can Help Prevent Most Eye Injuries

- More than \$1 Billion Spent Annually on Costs Related to Eye Injuries -

CHICAGO (Sept. 25, 2013) – Each year in the United States, more than 2.5 million eye injuries occur and 50,000 people permanently lose part or all of their vision, according to the [American Academy of Ophthalmology](#). And, a recent [report](#) from Prevent Blindness America, the nation’s oldest volunteer eye health and safety organization, shows that the annual costs related to eye injuries are more than \$1.3 billion.

Because more eye injuries occur in and around the home, Prevent Blindness America has declared October as Home Eye Safety Awareness Month to help educate the public on steps that can be taken to avoid painful and costly injuries. Free information can be found at the group’s dedicated web page, PreventBlindness.org/eye-safety-home.

Eye injuries can occur from a variety of common sources, such as flying debris from lawn mowers or trimmers, or splashes from household cleaners, paints or solvents. Prevent Blindness America urges everyone to wear protective eyewear approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) when performing household activities. The eyewear should have the “Z-87” logo stamped on the frames. For those who wear prescription glasses, many safety glasses or goggles will fit over regular glasses. Regular eyeglasses do not always provide enough protection, and may even cause further injury upon impact.

“Because most eye injuries can be avoided by wearing proper eye protection, we want the public to be diligent about protecting their vision even when doing the most mundane tasks,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. “Accidents can happen in an instant but have an impact on eye health for the rest of your life.”

Knowing what to do for an eye emergency can save valuable time and possibly prevent vision loss. Prevent Blindness America offers a free “First Aid for Eye Emergencies” sticker in both English and Spanish that can be placed on the inside of a medicine cabinet. Basic eye injury first aid instructions include:

Chemical Burns to the Eye

- Immediately flush the eye with water or any other drinkable liquid. Hold the eye under a faucet or shower, or pour water into the eye using a clean container. Keep the eye open and as wide as possible while flushing. Continue flushing for at least 15 minutes.
- DO NOT use an eyecup. DO NOT bandage the eye.
- If a contact lens is in the eye, begin flushing over the lens immediately. This may wash away the lens.
- Seek immediate medical treatment after flushing.

Specks in the Eye

- DO NOT rub the eye.
- Try to let tears wash the speck out or use an eyewash.
- Try lifting the upper eyelid outward and down over the lower lid.
- If the speck does not wash out, keep the eye closed, bandage it lightly, and see a doctor.

Blows to the Eye

- Apply a cold compress without putting pressure on the eye. Crushed ice in a plastic bag can be taped to the forehead to rest gently on the injured eye.
- In cases of pain, reduced vision, or discoloration (black eye), seek emergency medical care. Any of these symptoms could mean internal eye damage.

Cuts and Punctures of the Eye or Eyelid

- DO NOT wash out the eye with water or any other liquid.
- DO NOT try to remove an object that is stuck in the eye.
- Cover the eye with a rigid shield without applying pressure. The bottom half of a paper cup can be used.
- See a doctor at once.

For more information on how to protect the eyes at home, eye protection recommendations, or to request the First Aid for Eye Emergencies sticker, call Prevent Blindness America at (800) 331-2020 or visit preventblindness.org/eye-safety-home.

About Prevent Blindness America

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates and regional offices, Prevent Blindness America is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020. Or, visit us on the Web at preventblindness.org or facebook.com/preventblindness.

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